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The Martyrs of Cilicia

1909



AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS
BOSTON



The Martyrs of Cilicia

APRIL, 1909

THE Annual Meeting of the American Board at Minneapolis, October 13-15, had one outstanding feature. On the afternoon of the first day, when the situation of the Turkish missions had been set forth in various addresses by missionaries from different fields, the survey of that needy empire culminated in a brief service commemorative of the Christian leaders who fell in the massacres that desolated the Central Turkey Mission last April. President John E. Merrill of the Central Turkey College read the names of the martyrs with a brief and apt characterization of each, while the great audience stood in token of respect. Rev. M. G. Papazian, himself a graduate of Central Turkey College, until recently pastor of the Haik Evangelical Church in Aintab and now of the Armenian Evangelical Church in New York City, followed with a memorial address, noble both in its expression and restraint. A heartfelt prayer by Rev. John P. McNaughton, missionary in Smyrna, closed the service.

It is impossible to reproduce the full impressiveness of the scene; President Merrill's roll of honor and Mr. Papazian's tribute are issued in this form that they may convey to many somewhat of the solemn yet exultant appeal of that tender hour.

The Roll of Martyrs

By President JOHN E. MERRILL, Ph.D., of Aintab

DANIEL MINER ROGERS.

Member of the South Church, New Britain, Conn. Graduate of Princeton University and of Hartford Theological Seminary. Pastor in East Dorset, Vt. Commissioned by the American Board in 1907, and designated to the Central Turkey Mission. Stationed in the province of Adana.

"Simple, sincere of purpose, holding naturally and steadily to his great ideal of serving Christ, hopeful, quietly reserved, yet loving with romantic devotion, carrying everywhere unassumingly a distinctly Christian atmosphere." This is the tribute of his pastor.

"Of wonderful self-effacement. 'For Thine honor and glory' was the characteristic phrase of his petitions and the fundamental motive of his life." So writes his wife.

And she sends to us today as from him, as from beside his grave in Adana, this message, "The battle is to the self-sacrificing and the brave, to those who bear the cross and who follow Christ, to those who work not for the praise of men but for the Kingdom of God."

HENRY MAURER.

Fell with Mr. Rogers at Adana. Member of the Mennonite mission at Hadjin. He was sympathetic and gentle, humble-minded and retiring, sacrificing easily, because he followed his Master implicitly, and therefore able to become daring and heroic; marked by an unmistakeable sweetness and kindness and a smile which his face bore even in death.

PROF. SARKIS LEVONIAN.

Graduate of the mission school in theology, and of the Sheffield Scientific School. Studied at the University of Basel. Connected with Central Turkey College at Aintab for thirty-one years, 1878-1909. Clear thinker, illuminating teacher, faithful preacher, sincere friend, true patriot, spiritual leader, man of science, and man of God.

GIRAGOS ZHAMGOCHIAN.

Pastor of the church in Sever-ek. Simple, enthusiastic, sympathetic, evangelistic, seeking young men in his old age. The last utterance heard from his lips was prayer for his murderers.

HAGOP KOUNDAKJIAN.

Pastor of the church in Hassan Beyli. Fellow-student with Professor Levonian in theology. A village pastor, apt in illustration; strong and great-hearted, adviser of all conditions of men.

SDEPAN HOVHANNESSIAN.

Pastor of the church in Kharne. Graduate of Central Turkey College and Marash Theological Seminary. Careful, persevering, self-sacrificing.

NAZARET HEGHINIAN.

Pastor of the Third Church in Marash. Graduate of Central Turkey College and Marash Theological Seminary. Studied in Edinburgh. Thoughtful, aspiring, cordial, confident; of thorough preparation and growing influence.

STILIANOS ASLANIDIS.

Pastor of the First Church in Hadjin. Studied at Central Turkey College; graduate of Marash Theological Seminary. A Greek; open and true, energetic, courageous.

ZACHARIA BEDROSSIAN.

Pastor of the church in Garmouch. Graduate of Central Turkey College and Harpoot Theological Seminary. Earnest, zealous, seeking the souls of men.

JURJIS SHEMMAS.

Pastor of the Syrian church in Oorfa. Graduate of Central Turkey College and Marash Theological Seminary. A Syrian; an ardent student, substantial in thought, able in administration, evangelistic in spirit.

NERSSES KOUYOUMJIAN.

Pastor of the church in Adiaman. Graduate of Central Turkey College and Marash Theological Seminary. Of intellectual ability and bright future. He refused the prospect of larger churches to bring the congregation of his native town to strength and self-support.

SETRAG EKMEKJIAN.

Pastor of the First Church in Oorfa. Studied at Central Turkey College; graduate of Harpoot Theological Seminary. Progressive, spiritually-minded, winning, humble.

MARKAR KALOUSDIAN.

Preacher of the church in Hamidiyeh. Always at work, unwearying in pastoral care.

LEVON SOGHOVMEYAN.

Preacher of the Second Church in Hadjin. Graduate of Central Turkey College and Marash Theological Seminary. Worthy of confidence, patient and forbearing, constant in endeavor, without guile.

ASADOUR TOPALIAN.

Preacher of the church in Fekke, which he founded. Studied at Central Turkey College. Useful in service as teacher and preacher.

HAGOP ALBARIAN.

Preacher of the church in Geben. Graduate of St. Paul's Institute and Marash Theological Seminary. From the utter change at his conversion, diligent, faithful, evangelistic.

GARABED KUPELIAN.

Preacher of the church of Osmaniye. Graduate of St. Paul's Institute at Tarsus and Marash Theological Seminary. Diligent in reading, the friend of his people.

MELIDON MALIAN.

About to be ordained as pastor of the church in Sis. Graduate of St. Paul's Institute and Marash Theological Seminary. Five years in prison at Acre, where he did not shrink from doing the work of an evangelist. Persistent in Christian service.

TAKVOR HAGOPIAN.

Preacher of the church in Baghche. Studied at Central Turkey College and at St. Paul's Institute. A man who loved his nation and his Lord.

ARDASHES BOYAJIAN.

Preacher of the church in Shar. Graduate of St. Paul's Institute and Marash Theological Seminary. Comforter and leader of his people in difficulty, gentle and kind.

HOVAGIM KAYAYAN.

Preacher of the church in Alboustan. Graduate of St. Paul's Institute and Marash Theological Seminary. Killed in Mr. Chambers's arms at Adana. Conscientious, energetic, friend of young men.

CONSTANTINE SIYAHIAN.

Preacher of the church in Kars. Graduate of Central Turkey College and Marash Theological Seminary. Modest, consecrated, genuine.

And to these might be added the names of the lay preacher of the church at Karakeoy, a brother of the Garmouch pastor who was killed, of the teacher of the school at Hassan Beyli, and of the delegates from various cities to the annual meeting of the Cilicia Union, who met death on their way to Adana.

" These All Died in Faith "

The Memorial Address

By Rev. M. G. PAPAŽIAN of New York

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen and greeted them from afar.”

THEY were a select company of souls endowed with the highest learning obtainable in the land of their nativity; with the gifts and graces of the Spirit which made them the salt of the earth; with unreserved consecration to the Saviour who called them through His grace and revealed Himself in their lives; with intense devotion to the Church purchased and sanctified by the sacrifice of the Cross; with undivided love to the suffering and stricken people for whose redemption they lived and labored; with a keen sense of Christian truth which transformed labor into love, duty into joy. They were men chosen and owned of God.

In daily life they glorified God through the ministrations of the Word by speech, by influence, by act, under conditions requiring the “work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope.” In large city as well as in obscure village, in the pulpit and in the quiet walks of life the message was delivered and the ministration was offered unobtrusively, unheralded and unrewarded by men. They lived unto God.

No less in death did they glorify God,—just like their Master whose passion and death even more than His character was the coronation of a Divine Life. They suffered and perished under circumstances quite suggestive of Gethsemane and Calvary of old. They were surprised in the midst of active ministry. They were denied the consolations of death-chamber. They “suffered without the gate.” They were “burned without the camp.” They died with undying joy in the heart and whispered prayer upon the lips. Was suffering ever so sweet, was death ever so life-like as when the white-haired saintly pastor uttered in his last breath a petition of forgiveness for his enemies? That was not death,—it was victory, the victory of faith “which hath overcome the world” and to which grim Death, “the last enemy,” can only add imperishable lustre and immortal glory.

As a friend who has known them intimately for years, as a fellow-worker who has shared their toils and privileges in the service of the Church, as an associate who, in public and in private, has many times conferred and prayed with them concerning the affairs of the Kingdom of God, also as one who certainly would have shared their martyrdom had I not been called away providentially, it is my sad and sacred duty to address these few words of tribute to the memory of the sainted missionaries and pastors and preachers and teachers of Cilicia whom violent death has placed in direct line with the noble army of patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs. Through faith they subdued kingdoms, they wrought righteousness, they quenched

the power of fire, they were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, they were slain with the sword. Blessed be the name of Him who quickened them into life which is life indeed, who mustered them into His service, who welcomed them into glory.

And now, my friends, they are gone, but there are things that remain. The land where they labored and sacrificed, the Redeemer unto whose likeness they were conformed in life and in death, the Gospel upon the altar of which they laid down their lives,—these abide and call upon us who survive for a fresh and complete dedication of body and soul unto the great task which they have left unfinished. We cannot mistake God's voice sounding from the blood-stained field afar off. The land whose soil was trodden by the feet of Jesus and saturated with the tears of Gethsemane ought to be, yea shall be, conquered into the Kingdom whose throne is Calvary, whose sceptre is the Cross, whose King is the Lamb, whose law is Love. At this moment, when we stand with bowed heads in the presence of the honored dead, let us not forget that they all, "having had witness borne to them through their faith," yet died without having seen the promises,—they died upon the eve of the regeneration of a sacred soil. As friends of the crowned martyrs and servants of the Lord Jesus, it behooves us, in the stillness of this solemn moment, humbly and prayerfully to resolve that, God willing, we will offer the Gospel of Love to that same race and religion which burned the churches and slew the prophets of Cilicia.

May God hear and accept our vow.

Repairing the Breach

MORE than a score of pastors snatched in a day from the thirty-five churches connected with the Central Turkey Mission; the colleges and theological seminary that trained them, inadequately maintained before, now pressed to undertake added work to meet the emergency; churches stripped of their buildings and of means to replace them, yet needing at once the safeguard of new sanctuaries; widows, orphans, homeless wanderers, destitute and discouraged lives everywhere; and withal a chance, such as never before, to minister in Christ's name to all the troubled races of that needy land! Who can contemplate this roll of martyrs without wishing to do something for the peoples for whose christianizing they laid down their lives. A gift sent to Frank H. Wiggin, Treasurer, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, will immediately be set to work repairing the breach.





